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Montgomery County to break ground for animal shelter in Derwood early next year

Building expected to be completed in 2012

by Mimi Liu | Staff Writer

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Montgomery County will break ground for its new animal services and adoption facility in Derwood early next year.

Construction of the 47,000-square-foot building will begin next spring and is expected to be completed in 2012, said David Dise, director of the county's Department of General Services.

"This will be a wonderful facility for both animal services and animal adoption, and a facility that the county in general will find nice," Dise said.

The one-and-a-half-story building will be located at the northwest corner of Muncaster Mill and Airpark roads. The county Planning Board approved the proposal for the animal shelter July 22.

Dise said the next step of the project is to obtain sediment control approval for the site and finalize the design of the animal shelter by the end of this month. The county also will begin to solicit contractors for the project.

Residents initially had concerns about the shelter and Laytonia Recreational Park, which will be on the same site as the animal shelter and is expected to open in 2013.

Before the park was proposed, residents were upset the shelter would be going on a piece of land that had been promised to them as a park. They also feared the facility would generate noise.

After plans were presented that combined the shelter and the park, residents responded more positively, but still worried about noise and additional traffic, or that home runs would hit cars traveling along Muncaster Mill Road.

Dise said access to the new facility will be "an easy in and easy out" off Muncaster Mill Road, and noise will not be a concern for nearby residents.

"The animals will reside inside the facility," Dise said. "There will be no discernible noise that I'm aware of outside the facility."

The animal shelter will be owned and operated primarily by the Montgomery County Police Department's Animal Services Division, but the Montgomery County Humane Society will continue to be in charge of pet adoptions and other functions.

Cris Bombaugh, president and chief executive of the humane society, said she and staff members are thrilled to hear the Planning Board approved the project.

"It's going to be a wonderful new home for the animals and a great place for both patrons and adopters of pets to come to," Bombaugh said.

Bombaugh said the county's humane society handles more than 9,000 animals each year, including wildlife.

Bombaugh said the new building will replace the two-story animal shelter on Rothgeb Drive in Rockville. That shelter, which opened in 1976, is crowded and in need of renovations.

Designed by the Frederick-based company Proffitt & Associates Architects, the new building will have public adoption areas, private animal holding and treatment areas, a conference room, and classroom and office space. The shelter also will house the isolation, quarantine and holding of feral, ill or seized animals.

Dise said the county is hoping the facility will gain silver status in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program.

Dise said geothermal heating and cooling are two of the environmentally friendly components to the building. He said the building will have vegetated rooftops with rainwater collected and stored for later use in flushing toilets.

Two outbuildings are also included on the site for bulk food storage and to function as a livestock barn with stalls, stacking coops and a feed storage area.

Dise said the independent nonprofit group Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being, which was formed by county residents, will raise money to maintain the operations of the new animal shelter.

The Planning Board also approved the proposal for Laytonia Park.

For more information, visit the county's Department of General Services at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DGS/. A website for Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being will be coming soon.